

Life Safety Trailer Program

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The Life Safety Trailer Program is an injury prevention educational experience targeted primarily towards kindergarten through six grade children, but includes people of all ages. Our program is delivered through local fire departments using Life Safety Trailers provided by the State Fire Marshal's Office. What makes this program successful is that it allows local fire departments to provide a hands on learning experience to their communities which otherwise they would not have the resources or funding to provide.

Through the Fire Marshal's Office, the trailers are delivered to the local fire department, set up, and local fire department members are trained to provide the actual instruction to the participants.



With the trailer program provided by the local departments, the learning experience is personalized to the participants. Local departments are encouraged to use the trailers in cooperation with local EMS agencies, hospitals, law enforcement, local Safe Kid Coalition chapters and other groups as part of a comprehensive safety presentation. This coalition is particularly successful at community fairs, celebrations or other community activities which draw a target population that otherwise might be missed. At schools, the children are given a hands on learning experience to reinforce the importance of personal safety, prevention techniques, and its value to them individually.

What is creative and novel about the Life Safety Trailers is that a very representative example of a typical home is recreated to demonstrate common hazards. There is a kitchen, living room, bathroom and bedroom which the participants are escorted through, shown hazards, and given instruction in hazard prevention or mitigation.

The trailers are provided with additional props, including VCR/TV's, costumes, handouts, animated mobile robots and other items to allow outside training activities to occur simultaneously as training occurs within the trailer. Smoke machines are in the trailers, with thermostat controlled heated doors allowing participants to "experience" a home fire escape drill under simulated fire conditions. The trailers are ADA compatible to provide wheelchair confined people an opportunity to experience the program.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign has identified unintentional injuries and death as the #1 health risk facing school age children. Preventable accidents are not just limited to children, adults can contribute to child injury in habits that are developed in the home. Injuries and deaths from residential fires also continue to be a national problem.

The hazards addressed in the Life Safety Trailers include burns, scalding, drowning, electrocution, fires, unsecured guns and poisoning. While in the trailers, participants see examples of hazards and solutions to prevent injury. While participants are outside the trailers, there is the opportunity to discuss bicycle safety, riding in vehicles, swimming, playing in unsafe areas and other safety hazards outside the home.

As we watch the local news or read the hometown newspaper, it is rare that a story of a local child injured or killed in a preventable accident is not included. We invest in the education of our children, but little is taught to these children to protect them from some of the greatest risks to their young lives.

The Life Safety Trailers are designed to educate our children with impressionable experiences so they may identify hazards and make the right choices to avoid injuring themselves. The trailer program also teaches parents how to keep children from harms way.

The trailers are provided to the local fire departments, **at no cost to them**, giving them an educational prop that can be used within their communities to accommodate a large number of people in a classroom type setting with a hands on teaching experience. This is valuable public education opportunity they otherwise might not ever have the resources to do on their own.



The most exciting achievement of the program is how well accepted the trailers have been with the local fire departments and their community. Every department that has used the trailers reported excellent feedback from the participants, children and adults alike. The children are excited as they learn from the experience. Adults show amazement at the simple things that can be done around the house that contribute to our well-being. The most common comment from the local fire department is that they wish they had a trailer of their own to use all year.

What makes the Life Safety Trailer program so exciting is that people of all ages can benefit from participation in the program. We may concentrate on children, but parents can also learn from the experience, and can help reinforce the principles taught to their children.

Injuries affect society both personally, in hardships on families and the individual, and the population as a whole in insurance costs and liability claims. By reducing preventable injuries, we can save the immediate family the initial pain and suffering, and in the long term, we can help to control the spiraling costs of health care in the country. A permanent disabling injury caused from a preventable accident will cost that individual and society for the rest of their life. Through cooperative efforts with local fire departments, we can "save" many of our citizens from the devastating effects of these injuries.